

CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY

The Certificate of Occupancy will be issued after all corrections have been made and final inspections are approved. Typically, the Certificate of Occupancy can be picked up two days after notifying the Occupancy Section of project completion. When complete, the certificate must be picked-up by the applicant or his/her designated agent. Please Note—Certificates are not mailed.



Building Code Enforcement's Mission

Assuring safe and healthy living, recreational and work environments for people throughout the City of Houston by efficiently administering the building code and providing exceptional customer service.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Inspections

Occupancy/Life Safety	832-394-8880
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Plan Review

Commercial	832-394-8810
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One Stop	832-394-8820
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Other Important Phone Numbers

Utility Analysis	832-394-8888
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Planning & Development	832-394-8849
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Health Department	832-394-8848
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Building Code Enforcement General	832-394-9494
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Automated Inspection Request Line	713-222-9922
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Websites

Building Code Enforcement http://www.houstonpermittingcenter.org/building-code-enforcement.html
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Permits/Inspections/Plan Review http://www.houstonpermittingcenter.org/city-of-houston-permits/online-permits.html
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General Information www.houstontx.gov/311

Public Works & Engineering Main Webpage www.publicworks.houstontx.gov

CITY OF HOUSTON

PUBLIC WORKS & ENGINEERING BUILDING CODE ENFORCEMENT

Occupancy Inspections for Existing Buildings

Without Changes in Use



This guide provides the qualifications and submittal requirements for requesting a Certificate of Occupancy for an existing building.

Occupancy Inspections
1002 Washington Avenue, Floor 1
Houston, TX 77002
(832)394-8880
Office Hours 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

OBTAINING A CERTIFICATE ON AN EXISTING BUILDING

The City of Houston Building Code requires all buildings or structures, other than single family residences or U-Occupancies (defined by the Building Code), to have a valid Certificate of Occupancy for the use of the building, space or portion thereof. The certificate is normally issued at the time of construction or when a remodel or change of use occurs. However, if the building does not have a Certificate of Occupancy or requires a Life Safety Certificate, the process is handled by the Occupancy Inspection Section of the Building Code Enforcement Branch.

WHEN IS A CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY REQUIRED?

- All tenants/owners of a commercial building or an individual lease space must have a valid Certificate of Occupancy (C.O.) **NOTE:** Multiple spaces or rooms may be contained under one tenancy without requiring a separate certificate.
- A C.O. must be obtained before a commercial building or an individual lease space within a commercial building is occupied.
- If the C.O. cannot be located for an existing building or lease space (and the space has not been modified), a duplicate C.O. must be obtained.
- When an existing occupancy classification is changed, plans and permits must be approved to obtain a new C.O. for the new use or occupancy. See also the Live/Work and Minor Change of Use (Form CE-1277 and CE-1276, respectively) guides for additional options for limited occupancies.

APPLICATION PROCESS

To apply for a Certificate of Occupancy for an existing building or lease space, the applicant must visit the Occupancy Inspections Section located at 1002 Washington Avenue, Houston, TX 77002 and submit the required documents.

SUBMITTAL PACKAGE

- [Application for Occupancy Compliance Inspection](#) (Form CE-1045)
- Deed Restriction Affidavit and Acknowledgement for Building Permit
- Current Texas State or U.S. photo Identification.
- If the application is for a new business, then the new business name must be provided.
- The complete business address.
- The business telephone number.
- The approximate square footage and number of floors.
- If multiple buildings are located on the same property, a site map must be provided showing the number of buildings and number of units per building.
Note: For apartments, the site plan must indicate the number of buildings and the number of apartment units per building.
- The present or proposed and the previous (if known) type of business.
- Inspection fees may be paid in the form of cash, personal check, cashier's check, money order, or credit card.



Online Application—Coming Soon!

INSPECTION PROCESS

The applicant will be provided with the date of the inspection.

1. A team of inspectors will visit the site and make a note of any code discrepancies.
2. The building will be inspected under the code edition year in which it was built along with the minimum requirements of the Life Safety Appendix of the current Building Code if constructed prior to 1986 or occupied.
3. A report will be generated and mailed to the applicant within two weeks. The report will indicate the type of corrections needed (structural, electrical, mechanical, or plumbing) and if any separate permits, as identified in #4, are required before making the corrections.
4. The applicant will have 180 days to obtain the required permits and complete the corrections. The owner or owner's agent may obtain the structural permit when required. Electrical, HVAC, and/or Plumbing permits may only be obtained by a licensed contractor.
5. Only the licensed contractor or person who holds the permit may call for inspections for work performed under that permit.
6. Once all repairs have been made and the final inspections approved, the applicant should call Occupancy Inspections to arrange when the Certificate of Occupancy can be picked up.

Note: A building will only be inspected under the Life Safety Appendix if it was built prior to January 1, 1963, or has been annexed.

[CONTINUES...](#)